

OLC 72-0747
23 June 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of Intelligence Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on 23 June 1972

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1. On 23 June 1972 Messrs. Maury and Carver, accompanied by [redacted] briefed the Intelligence Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on current intelligence and developments in Indochina. The discussion included Top Secret/Sensitive material.

2. Present for all or part of the session were:

Lucien Nedzi, (D., Mich.), Chairman
Melvin Price (D., Ill.)
Alvin E. O'Konski, (R., Wis.)

3. Present from the Committee staff was:

Frank Slatinshek

4. Mr. Maury opened the briefing and covered the upcoming Soyuz mission, Soviet delivery of Flogger fighters to frontal aviation, Soviet T-62 tank deliveries to Egypt, certain Chinese Communist security measures and the status of ChiCom CSS-1. Mr. Carver followed with an overview of Indochina touching on major items relating to South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos during which Chairman Nedzi expressed particular interest in Agency operations in Laos and the dope traffic in Southeast Asia.

5. In response to questioning concerning numbers of troops being supported in Laos, Mr. Carver circulated a chart titled "Total Friendly Forces in Laos" of 24 May, a copy of which was left with the Committee.

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As for the dope question Mr. Slatinshek summarized the congressional problem in the form of a question by asking Mr. Carver what repercussions might be expected if Congress succeeds in passing a law eliminating all economic aid to Thailand because of the drug enforcement question. It was indicated that such action would have a much broader effect than attempting to persuade a few officials to be a little more scrupulous in enforcement. It would really cut the legs out from under the United States and its present position in Southeast Asia.

6. At the conclusion of the meeting Chairman Nedzi said that he noted a striking similarity between the verbiage the Agency uses in explanation before the Armed Services Committee and the verbiage used in press reports and columns on the same subject. He asked how this happens, whether we provide briefings or what, noting that the Agency should be very sensitive to the problems involved in the Congress over the Agency in this area. Mr. Slatinshek noted that it bothers him "seriously that you have press backgrounder--the moment you confirm or deny a situation you become an adversary with the Department of State as a for instance--permitting yourself to give backgrounder makes you subject to charges that you are being used politically by the Administration." Representative Price said he felt it is a "very dangerous" practice. The Chairman closed this point of discussion by noting that:

"It is a real thicket. Frank stated our apprehensions--once you accord briefings to certain reporters you are exercising judgment--and it is all self-serving--you know congressmen are familiar with this matter of having favored reporters. You have walked this tightrope very successfully because I have never heard you accused of the things we have discussed here about backgrounder."

7. Chairman Nedzi requested a short paper (a few paragraphs) "of what we understand the military does regarding transfer of surplus equipment in Laos and justification for so doing." He also noted that it will be useful to go into this question in more detail a little further down the road in a future meeting.

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Assistant Legislative Counsel

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